

This is BILK # 56 for November 1993. My address still is Hohenheimer Straße 60, D-73770 Denkendorf, Germany, although I have to move home again. I will have a new address from January 1st, 1994. If you don't have that address but want to write to me after that day, please use the old address: Stuhlbruderhofstr. 4, D-67112 Mutterstadt. Subscription (6 issues, 1 year) are still at 15 DM for Europe and DM 20 for the rest of the world.

#### BEHEMOTH

- Loch Ness: Andreas Trottmann has sent me a bunch of clippings on Loch Ness. Two clips from the Inverness Courier are concerned with tourism: in a letter Hugh T Grant asks in the Sept 3, 93, issue why there is no sign at Lochend to indicate to the tourists that they have reached the Highland's most famous attraction, and in the Courier for Aug 6, 93, Donald W Skinner finds it a disgrace people have to pay for parking at Urquhart Castle, while the same issue has a letter by anon describing how an idiot water skier frightened a swan swimming in the Loch. For most of us who have been at the Loch I think it is a place of beauty and I wouldn't like to have it developed further, but as it is the only source of income for most of the locals we can hardly blame them for not being ecologically enraged about the destruction of the countryside around Loch Ness. More on the Urquhart Car park was in the Inverness Courier (Aug 13), a bungee jump at Loch Ness was described in the Courier (Sept 93), the MacInness report (see below for more on that) was in the Daily Express June 24, 93 and in the Daily Mail June 26, 93.

- Lake Bassenthwaite: This is a lake 4 Miles long, 1000 yards across and up to 25 yards/meter deep in the English Lake District. The owners of the Armanthwaite Hotel claim the lake hides a monster and promise to pay 10 000 pounds and a weeklong holiday for those who first capture "Bassie" on film, according to the Inverness Courier (Sept 10, 93, credit: Andreas Trottmann). I recall a sighting report from one of the Cumbrian lakes mentioned in an article on Nessie from 1975 (during the big fuss). This could be worth checking...

- Shanxi, China: According to an AP report in Bangor Daily News, Sept 10, p.24 (credit: Loren Coleman) the Chinese have found the oldest pictorial depiction of a dragon among cliff paintings in the southwestern corner of Shanxi province (north-central China). The image is 10 000 years old and is surrounded by a female deer carrying a young deer on her back and a strange creature, a fish with deer horns, according to Xinhua News Agency. The site dates to the mesolithic, and 1 000 stone tools have been found there. Archaeological news from China usually also have a propaganda function, so we have to wait until a specialised magazine will give more details.

- Bibliography: Die Rheinpfalz (Sept 24) had a short report on the British fondness of betting. Graham Sharpe, of the bookmaker company William Hill, explained how many betted on unlikely things, like Michael Jackson and his sister LaToya being the same person, or the proof for Ufos or Nessie. "Our company would be in dire straits indeed if a ufo with Nessie as pilot appeared!" / Loch Ness expedition in summer 1992 (Tauchen, Sept 1992, p.9) / Lambert Wilson's "I invented Nessie in 1938"-hoax, taken serious (Tauchen Okt 92, p.10) / a killer pike in a Dutch gravel pit near Meppel eats a bullterrier (Tauchen July 92, p.10) / Nessletter 114, Aug 93, has a brilliant documentation of the new Nessie sighting, in June, by Edna MacInnes. Rip Hepple suggests she saw a man standing in a small boat and mistook him for the monster's long neck. Nessletter is always worth reading, the address still is Rip Hepple, 7 Huntshieldforf, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL13 1 RQ, UK.

#### ISIS

- Is the merman a shaman? San rock-art from southern Africa close to Ezeljagdspoor shows strange beings, a mixture of a human with long, fin or wing-like hands and a fish tail. Now David Lewis-Williams and Thomas A Dowson and Janette Deacon have suggested in Antiquity (June 93; reprinted in The Ley Hunter 119, p.4) that these are not merman, but symbols of the shaman in flight - the fish tails are actually swallow tails... However, on p.13, Paul Devereux mentions traditions of the "subterranean and subaquatic journey" of the shaman. Could not the tail symbolize both? And I wonder if not the earliest of all merman-like figures, the Sumerian Ea (Babylonian Oannes, of Ancient-Astronauts-fame) has something to do with it? Perhaps he had a swallow's tail originally, but when he was later introduced into written lore, his shamanic origins had been forgotten and he was turned into a fish-man?

#### KRAKEN

- I have been reading Peter Benchley's "Beast" recently. Don't waste your money on it, it is a crude imitation on his earlier Jaws. Benchley mentions (on p. 159 of the German edition) a giant squid attack on a ship in 1941 - this could be based on a real in-

cident.

● Michel Raynal sent me new clippings on the supposed giant octopus of Florida. The BBC Wildlife (August 1993, p. 33) has a one page report by J Richard Greenweill on it, recounting the 1897 Florida carcass and the second find, in May 1988, on a Bermuda Beach, of a "large, grey, shapeless mass of tissue". We learn that samples of the thing have been tested by several institutes, but no conclusive evidence as to what the things are has been found. A shark, however, is being ruled out. Michel also sent me his article, Le Monstre de Floride de 1896, co-authored with Michel Dethier, from the Bulletin de la Société neuchâtoise (date missing) which summarises the case.

MARINE LIFE: ● shark attack, Hongkong: Stuttgarter Zeitung, 14 June, p.16. ● Melissa Rodriguez, 12, was wounded by a shark at Daytona Beach, Florida. Surgeons saved her life and leg: USA Today, 10 July, p.3A ● A 8ft barracuda caught by Nadine Vloer, 40, off the Florida Keys lept into the boat and bit Cloer's hand and hip: BILD July 13, p. 8; USA Today July 13, p.3A ● A 10-year-old boy was killed by an alligator in Loxahatchee River, Florida. The boy stood in the river when the reptile attacked. The last alligator attack in Florida was 5 years ago, when a 4-year-old girl was killed: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung June 21, p.7.. ● Coelacanth caught at Quelimane, Mosambique (Tauchen April 1992, p.13) ● Shark attack on diver off Honshu, Japan (Tauchen Sept 92, p.8) ● Sometime, somewhere in Germany, somebody caught a live piranha (sometimes I can't find my clips...!) ● Also in August, a school of whales stranded at the German coast (source was Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, but this clip was filed with the previous one...)

DINOSAURS ● Some readers might have noticed a preference for dinosaurs in the media lately. In depth research has confirmed a connection between this mild global form of hysteria and a movie called Jurassic Park. I liked the movie, but by now am pretty bored by reports on the discovery of dinosaurs eggs, so I clear my clipping collection before i throw it away. Here it comes: University of Chicago researchers have discovered a 400 pound dinosaur which they have named "killer-dinosaur". They regard it as the ancestor of T Rex (Berliner Zeitung, Nov 26, 1992, p.31) - According to a Xinhua report, fossil dinosaur-bones have been discovered in a mountain slope at Chongqing in Sichuan province. The remains are 170 - 180 million years old. The region is well known for dinosaur remains, the new ones were from a member of the sauropoda-group (Rheinpfalz, Dec 15, 92) - A fossil dinosaur egg with an embryo inside was investigated with state of the art x-ray technology in the Lawrence-Livermore-Labs, California. The egg comes from south China, and there are 500 eggs known today, only 100 with an embryo (Sonntag Aktuell, June 6, 93) - Only a few days after it's premiere, Jurassic Park was running in 3000 US-theatres and had earned 50 million dollars (Blick, Switzerland, June 12, 93, p.9) - Once again, dino eggs from China are in the news in the Rheinpfalz, July 3, 93. This report gives the number of dino eggs found as "more than 10 000", they have been found in 14 Chinese provinces. The first find was in 1974. More exiting was a find of Tyranosaurus Rex bones in Montana. Scientists found red blood corpuscles in the bone and hope to isolate its DNS to compare it with that of birds, the nearest relatives of the big dinos. This sounds very much like the Spielberg thing, I suppose the US palaeontologists want their share of attention, and more important, funding by giving the press what it wants. Nevertheless, such a comparison of DNS could solve the question of whether dinos were warm-blooded and actually belong to the birds... It could also inject new blood into the Loch Ness debate. A warm blooded, bird-like dino could be a new candidate to explain the sightings. - Dino eggs, 10 this time, auctioned at Bonhams in London. The eggs are from China, again, and were expected to sell at 22 000 pounds Sterling (Rheinpfalz, Aug 21, 93) - In the first week of October, one of the Stuttgart papers and the Rheinpfalz reported the sensational find of several thousand dino eggs from China.

ARCHAEOLOGY: ● A phoenician ship, 2500 years old, the best preserved so far, has been excavated in Marseilles (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Aug 18, p.25) ● A WW 1 submarine from Germany was discovered buried in a dune near Istanbul (Sonntag Aktuell, Sept 9). There was some speculation about this find, but it was later revealed how the thing had got into its unusual place some way from the sea by the evolution of the coastline in the last 80 years. ● England loses and average of 2 m coastline to the sea at Hull and Scarborough, according to a small report in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, July 22, p. R4).

This ends this BILK, hope to see you all with the next issue in 1994. Best wishes for a good and healthy new year.